Pocahontas Chapter 7

6 Hillsboro, Pocahontas Co.

Little Levels Academy was established in 1842 under a charter granted by the State of Virginia. The incorporators were Josiah Beard, S. D. Poage, Samuel Mathews, James Lewis, Moses Poage, John Hill, Thomas Hill, James Miller and Richard McNeel. The first Principal was Rev. Joseph Brown, who served seven years. He was succeeded by Rev. M. D. Dunlap who remained at the head of the institution for eleven years, until 1860, when the war (Civil) came on and the school closed. The school was re-opened in the sixties under the name of Hillsboro College, but was closed again before the end of the war.

This was the first school of high order in the County, and it left its impress upon the educational interest of the County. In 1865 the county purchased the building and it was used for public schools from 1870 throughout the eighties. Large contributions from the citizens and the public school money again made it a school of high order for boys--combined with a grade system under the name of Hillsboro Academy. A school of high order for girls was also established in the large basement of the Methodist Church, known as Hillsboro College, also as Little Levels Seminary. The teachers in the girls school were Miss Lizzie Gibson, of Staunton, Va, Principal, Miss Bettie Fulwider, Miss Henrietta Goldman, Miss Lydia McNeel, and Miss Nettie Stulting. Teachers in boys school were Prof. McCutcheon, Principal of Lexington, Va., Randolph Smith and his brother John of Richmond, Va. and C. J. Stulting, Hillsboro, W. Va.

The old brick Academy was torn down and a new frame building took its place. The building had six rooms. Prof. C. A . Brown of Virginia, Principal, who was regarded by the people as an excellent teacher. Both boys and girls went to the same school, and the little town of Hillsboro and the farm homes were filled with boarders.

The frame building was finally set aside and a handsome brick high school building known as the Hillsboro High School was built, and later a large gray brick building for the grades. The grounds of these handsome buildings open on the Seneca Trail State Road. Large school buses transport the students for miles in every direction. The school is equipped with modern equipment. The teachers are Prof. Frank K. Johnson, of Virginia, Miss Brake of Ohio, Miss Helen Smith, Marlinton and Alexander McLaughlin, of Hillsboro.

The county has good schools for the negroes. The Board of Education employs good teachers for the negroes and they are doing good work.

The little White Pole Church mentioned elsewhere was the first Church built in Little Levels District. The growing need of a large Church was seen when Nathaniel Kennison and William Kennison gave a lot in the eastern part of the town of Hillsboro for a new Church. Soon a fine Church with a large basement for schools was erected. The members of the White Pole Church transferred their records to Wesley Chapel--the new Church. Many noted preachers proclaimed the gospel in that Church. Among them the noted Bishop Asbury.

Frontier Chapter 7

Among the noted supporters of this Church were James Lewis & wife Joseph (Rebecca Beard, Mattie Beard, Joel Hill, Rebecca Hill, Thomas Hill and Annie Hill, William Kennison and Nancy Kennison, Nathaniel Kennison and wife, Samuel Auldridge and wife Susan. Among the younger members who loved this Church were the late R. W. Hill and Margaret Hill, father and mother of the late Hon. Frank Raymond Hill, George R. Curry, William Clendenen, George Hill.

The first Presbyterian Church was organized within the present limits of the county was known as Oak Grove Presbyterian Church on the Little Levels in the year 1793. For a period of thirty seven years after its organization it had neither pastor nor stated supply. The only preaching being by Ministers from distant fields who visited this mountain section. Rev. John McCue was the first Minister. After him came Rev. Loomis. He was succeeded by the celebrated John McElheny, D. D. who preached for many years at the Oak Grove Church and did much in securing its permanency.

In the year 1830 this Church was reorganized by Rev. S. L. Graham and at the time numbered but nine members, including four deacons, who were Josiah Beard, George Poage, John Jordan and S. D. Poage. Mr. Graham was pastor of this Church for thirty nine years when he was succeeded by Rev. J. S. Blaine, then by Rev's. D. S. Cunningham, William Brown, Joseph Brown, M. D. Dunlap and D. S. Sydenstricker. Oak Grove Church was one mile from Hillsboro, built of an excellent quality of brick, During the years of 1870 and 1874, the

Church was moved to Hillsboro and a large frame Church was built, with a basement for Sunday School rooms and which was built with the bricks of the old Church. About thirty years ago the frame Church gave ~~its~~ place to a modern new brick Church. Rev. J. C. Johnson was pastor of the New Church for a number of years--then Rev. Randolph Adkison and now Rev. Marlin B. Curry.

An old and honored ruling elder in this Presbyterian Church is Mathew John McNeel, aged 92 years. He is still an active elder and has served the three Churches. He is regarded as a pillar of old Oak Grove Presbyterian Church.

Mathew Lee Beard, aged 84 years is another honored elder. He has been faithful in his services as ruling elder and a pillar in this Church. These old elders are loved and honored by the entire congregation.

Hills Creek Falls

Hills Creek Falls is one of the most wonderful natural curiosities of Pocahontas County. We travel into the heart of the Mountains to see these falls, yet the pen fails to give adequate description of the manner in which the water falls over the rocks. It is an hours climb up the mountain to the lower or main fall which is a clear drop of seventy feet, the water being transformed into spray before it reaches the bottom. About three hundred

yards above it the second fall, where the water has a drop of thirty five feet, and two hundred yards beyond is the third fall which has a drop of forty feet.

Hills Creek is a wonderful stream in southern Pocahontas, fifteen yerds in width. It disappears at the foot of Droop Mountain and has an under ground passage under this tremendous mountain for about four miles, when it emerges, and is called Locust Creekfor about two miles where it enters Greenbrier River. Large parties visit Hills Creek Falls every summer and express themselves delighted with the wonderful outing.

Another scene that cannot be described but must be seen to be appreciated, is the sunrise from top of Drooping Mountain. We will give it as described by two ministers, who were on top of this mountain to see nature in her great beauty. Drooping Mountain overlooks much of southern Pocahontas and commands an entrancing view of Hillsboro and its charming rural surroundings of grove, field and orchard. They slowly ascended the broad winding road up the mountain side toward the summit. Their view on every hand was shut in by the dense misty barriers. Upon reaching the crest of the mountain, the sun was seen in all its glorious power and light, ready to roll away the mists that were over the hills, vales and the streams, keeping them from view. The scene was one of adoration and awe. Words could not fitly express the scene. The radiant power of the sun had come and was working miracles. The surface of the vast cloud beneath began

to rise and roll like waves and as one would tower above others near, it seemed to draw them along, till all had vanished in upward viewless flight.

Drops of dissolving mist were on the leaves like pearls and they hung the bushes with brilliants and shone like diamonds on the grass.